

The telephone survey of North Carolina citizens showed that opinions of hunting on Sunday are strongly polarized. Sixty-five percent of North Carolina citizens opposed legalizing hunting on Sunday, with the majority of those strongly opposing legalization. Twenty-five percent of North Carolina citizens supported legalizing hunting on Sunday. Few people were undecided about the issue and levels of support and opposition were consistent across all regions of the state. Although 65% of North Carolina citizens opposed hunting on Sunday, citizens of the state overwhelmingly approved (81%) of hunting overall.

Opponents of hunting on Sunday most often cited religious reasons for their opposition. People who attended church on a frequent basis were more likely to oppose hunting on Sunday than those who attended less frequently or not at all. Supporters of hunting on Sunday most often cited additional opportunities to hunt and separation of church and state, i.e., the decision to hunt on Sunday should be a personal choice rather than a government decision. Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents said the personal choice argument was the most convincing reason to support hunting on Sunday. The most convincing reasons to oppose hunting on Sunday included consideration of Sunday as a day for other outdoor recreationists to enjoy the woods without worrying about the presence of hunters (77%), Sunday as a day of rest (70%), interference with church activities (65%) and concern that hunting on Sunday would strain the resources and personnel of the Wildlife Resources Commission (63%).

Hunters were equally polarized on the issue of Sunday hunting and slightly more supportive of legalization of hunting on Sunday overall than North Carolina citizens in general. Although licensed resident hunters who responded to both the telephone survey of citizens and the mail survey of hunters were about evenly split on the issue, adjusting the data to account for nonresponse bias resulted in 38% of hunters expressing support for legalizing hunting on Sunday and 53% of hunters opposing legalization. Older hunters and hunters who attended church more frequently were more likely to oppose hunting on Sunday than younger hunters and hunters who attended church less frequently. Hunters cited essentially the same reasons for either supporting or opposing hunting on Sunday that other North Carolina citizens did. Seventy-seven percent of hunters cited the personal choice aspect (rather than a government decision) as a major reason to support hunting on Sunday and 75% of supportive hunters cited the additional opportunities that Sunday hunting would provide for working people. Sixty-eight percent of hunters who opposed hunting on Sunday cited religious reasons, while 62% cited conflicts with other recreationists.

Hunters were even less supportive of scenarios for limited hunting on Sunday than they were for unlimited hunting on Sunday. Only 4% of hunters who opposed hunting on Sunday overall said that they would support hunting on Sunday with some limitations. Nineteen percent of hunters who supported hunting on Sunday overall said they opposed hunting on Sunday with various limitations. Landowners who currently allow hunting on their lands were approximately evenly split on the issue.

Approximately one-half of hunters in both the telephone survey of citizens and the mail survey of hunters said they would be likely to hunt on Sunday if it was legalized. Twenty-five percent of hunters responding to the telephone survey and 37% of hunters responding to the mail survey said they would hunt more days each year if hunting on Sunday was legalized. Hunters currently hunt an average 24 days that do not involve an overnight stay each year and on average, they